Museum Exhibit Initiative Nears $200,000

The concept design phase of the museum exhibit initiative and fund raising for the entire project are nearing completion. The Center’s staff and the exhibit design team from Split Rock Studios, Minneapolis, have met several times to plan the overall vision of the exhibits. With naming gifts to date from Les Baylor, Vern Berg, Estate Gordon (‘57-‘59) and Joan (‘59) Nelson Family, Larry Ness, Lynwood Oyos, and A. John Sletten, funding for the initiative has surpassed 90% of the $200,000 goal. Opportunities still remain for naming gifts ($10,000-$50,000) and sponsoring gifts ($1,000-$9,999) for the exhibit initiative.

“One of the projects that a robust endowment allows us to undertake is to plan for the redesign and expansion of our long-term museum exhibits,” observed Executive Director Harry Thompson, referring to the successful completion of the Endowment Campaign. “Those who contributed to the endowment and the exhibits have secured a bright future for the Center,” added Thompson.

The goal of the Exhibit Expansion Initiative is to feature in new and compelling ways the remarkable treasures found in the Center’s collection. Special emphasis will be placed on sharing with the public the letters and photographs from the Center’s archives. These documents will be further highlighted by such objects as a plow used to break the sod in Dakota Territory, the steering wheel from a steamboat that plied the upper Missouri River, and a bell from a locomotive engine that pulled cars laden with grain and passengers across the Dakota plains.

Additional features of the exhibit redesign will allow CWS to place on display some of the remarkable examples of quill and beadwork from the Blue Cloud Abbey American Indian Collection. The exhibits will also introduce visitors to authors: Ed Bolvaag, Herbert Krause, and Frederick Manfred, whose lives are intertwined with CWS and whose writings help define the Northern Plains region.

Call for Art in Observance of South Dakota’s 125th Anniversary

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The exhibit carries a $2,500 grand prize and $1,500 in additional cash prizes, as approved by the Board of Directors of the Center for Western Studies. Both two- and three-dimensional pieces are welcome, but the work of art must be suitable for display on a gallery wall or pedestal.

Native American artists are encouraged to share their unique perspectives on ways in which statehood has impacted the lives of indigenous peoples. The proposal must include a brief artist’s statement about the work as a response to the observance of South Dakota’s 125th anniversary. The proposal form and additional information are available at www.augie.edu/center-for-western-studies or call CWS Education Assistant Kristi Thomas.

The panel of judges will include members of the Art Committee of the Center’s Board of Directors and others appointed by the Board.
Gifts in Memory of Gil Johnson

CWS members who attend the Dakota Conference will recall the name and gentle presence of Gil Johnson, former librarian and storyteller from Chamberlain. Lillian Johnson notified the Center that gifts in memory of her husband, who passed away on November 17, 2013, have been bequeathed to CWS. Both Gil and Lillian were long-time presenters at the conference and both received the Conference Distinguished Service Award, Gil in 2002 and Lillian in 2007. Gil's personal gifts may be sent to the Center and condolences to Lillian Johnson, 1209 S. Maan, Chamberlain, SD 57225.

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New Research from CWS

Perhaps the most famous image in the “prairie trilogy” by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather is that of a plough (Cather’s spelling) resting in the field against the setting sun. Generally regarded as the iconic novel of the Great Plains, My Ántonia is Cather’s unvarnished depiction of immigrant settlement in Nebraska in the 1880s. In an article published this fall in Interdisciplinary Literary Studies (vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 203-209), a journal of the Pennsylvania State University Press, Executive Director Harry Thompson argues that this novel should be understood not simply as representing the past realistically but almost as if Cather can know the past as we know it.

In “This Is Not a Plough: Magritte, Foucault, and Resisting Authenticity in Cather’s My Ántonia,” Thompson capitalizes on the work of French theorist Michel Foucault, whose study of the Belgian artist René Magritte’s Surrealist paintings, such as This Is Not a Pipe, he takes as the point of reference for the title of the article. A hallmark of both of these works is their pursuit of historical authenticity, which Cather employs but then simultaneously undermines in My Ántonia, Thompson observes. It is this tension that opens up the possibility of reading a Cather novel in a new way.

The article provides several examples of ways the novel struggles with its perceived role of accurately portraying the Plains settlement period, suggesting Cather’s own discomfort with representing the past and her efforts to challenge, and has also helped me understand that I expect to work in a museum or an archive setting would be.

In addition to working in the archives, I have also had the opportunity to work with some CWS events outside of the archives including the Dakota Conference in the spring and the annual Boe Forum. My favorite has been helping with the Boe Forum, because I have had so many really engaging speakers, and I love being able to be a part of making it happen! I have really enjoyed my time here and look forward to where this experience takes me!

Papers and Authors Sought for Dakota Conference on World War One Era

World War I and its immediate aftermath changed the people of the Plains and their sense of identity in many ways. The Center is seeking papers and panels that address the specific conference theme of The Great War and the Northern Plains or aspects of life on the Plains during the years 1910-1920. Papers on other topics related to the Northern Plains are also welcome.

Those wishing to present should mail a one-page paper or session proposal with title, brief description and biographical sketch, along with name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, to “Dakota Conference” at CWS or send information via e-mail to dakotaconference@augie.edu. Submission forms are available online at www.augie.edu/cws/Proposals are due Monday, February 14, 2014. Please indicate whether you would also be willing to serve as a session chair.

Authors scheduled to appear at the conference autograph party include Bruce Blake, unveil Thousand Years of Dreams: The Story of the Far Eastern Society’s market program); Jon Lauck, The Lost Region Toward a Revival of Midwestern History; John Miller, Small-Town Dreamy: Stories of Midwestern Boys Who Shaped America; Myra Feddersen, Balloons; Moffi Flying South Dakota Skies and Bernie Hubsch, South Dakota 125: A Pictorial History, which includes photographs from the CWS archives.

Boe Forum Speaker Sees China’s Global Influence Rising

In the weeks since the Boe Forum on November 4, China unilaterally claimed the airspace between China and Japan, testing the ability of the United States to manage its own strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Military planes from the United States, China, Japan, and South Korea have all flown through the contested air zone since China’s declaration. How to prevent such tensions from escalating into conflict is a concern raised by this year’s Boe Forum speaker, former U.S. Ambassador to China Jon Huntsman (2009-2011). Governor Huntsman provided first-hand knowledge of the role of China in shaping the future ‘I suspect the most important story in the next century will be the rise of China and how we reacted to it’. Huntsman remarked. The Boe Committee, a committee of the CWS Board of Directors and two student advisors, selected China and its relationship with the United States as the topic for the 18th Boe Forum on Public Affairs and invited Jon Huntsman as the speaker.

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Artists of the Plains Show & Sale Offers Underwriting Opportunities

In preparation for the 34th Annual Artists of the Plains Art Show and Sale, February 14-16, 2014, the Art Committee of the Center for Western Studies took on the arduous task of choosing which of the many talented artists who had applied would ultimately be invited to the show. The artists chosen for the 2014 show truly represent the diversity of what it means to live on the Northern Plains. New to the show this year, artist James Star Comes Out represents a strong traditional Native American voice with intricate beadwork and dance sticks, while longtime art show participant Jennifer Stone uses the modern mixed media to demonstrate her unique perspective of life on the Northern Plains.

The show and sale will run Friday, February 14, 5:00-9:00 pm with awards presented at 8:00 pm; Saturday, February 15, 10:00 am-6:00 pm; and Sunday, February 16, 10:00 am-5:00 pm. The popular Silent Auction will close at 2:00 pm on Sunday. The Center will again offer a cash prize of $200 for first place in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork, as well as a $100 cash prize for second place in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork.

Student artists have become an important part of the art show. The event gives many students their first chance to sell their artwork. It also provides them real-world experience and the opportunity to observe the business side of art. Continued funding from CWS Board member Roger Haugo allows student artists the chance to receive cash prizes.

The Artists of the Plains Art Show and Sale is seeking underwriters to partner with the Center to continue to bring remarkable artists to Sioux Falls. The following individual and corporate naming opportunities are available:

- **Premiere Reception (Opening Night)**—$1,000 (2 gifts of $500 also possible)
- **Artists’ Awards**—$600 (2 gifts of $300 also possible)
- **Exhibit Hall Rental**—$2,000 (2 gifts of $1,000 or 4 gifts of $250 also possible)

The Artists of the Plains Art Show and Sale, which is free and open to the public, is a Sioux Falls institution, bringing thousands of people to the downtown area every year. Please contact Education Coordinator Kristi Thomas if you would like more information about how you can help support the arts in Sioux Falls.

The following artists have been invited to this year’s show: Bryan Bortnem, Russ Duerrksen, Genevieve Escho, Rodger Ellingson, Jess Elofson, Jerry Fogg, Marian Henjum, Carol Lundeen, Donny Monticello, Sue Patrick, Jeremy Ruf, James Star Comes Out, Jennifer Stone, Johnny Swatek, Megan Sweets, Paul Szabo, Linda Szabo, Brian Szabo, Ed Thomas, Karlys Wells, Jennifer White, and Drake Wood.

**Gift Shop Upgrade Highlights Books and Jewelry**

With over 500 book titles in inventory, our shelf space made it challenging to highlight our Center for Western Studies publications and gift shop books. Under the direction of Office Coordinator Amy Nelson and with the help of student work-study students, Kelsey Goplin, Jasmin Graves, Nicole Schmilpeling, and one of our volunteers, Dick Sabers, we have been busy clearing shelves and organizing our inventory. We now rotate our books in and out of the gift shop, allowing us to bring more attention to our titles, facilitate browsing, and make our once formidable wall of books a thing of the past. Rare and bargain-priced used books will also be rotated into the gift shop.

Creatively displaying and highlighting the work of our artists and their jewelry has been another area of focus. Creating artist information cards, material descriptions, and store cards—like the one for Jerry Fogg’s beaded medallion necklaces—are ways we are accomplishing this.

The Center for Western Studies carries beautiful note cards by artists such as Robert Aldern, Russ Duerrksen, Jerry Fogg, Deb Norby, and Aldern, donated two boxes of correspondence and subject files related to dozens of his commissioned artworks, including those for the Augusta College Chapel. Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, and Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls.

Several of these collections can be viewed on the Hovland Center for Liturgical Arts on-line database.

**Donna Dexter Collection:** This summer, Collections Assistant Liz Thonrd assisted Donna Dexter of Keepers of the Canton Native Asylum, which operated in Canton, SD. Participants Manfred Hill, Charles Hall, and one with co-author Stanford Taylor, on the Collection:

**Glenn E. (“Doc”) Soladay Collection:** Elizabeth Soladay recently donated materials related to her grandmother, Elizabeth Soladay, who grew up in Canton, SD. Participants Manfred Hill, Charles Hall, and one with co-author Stanford Taylor, on the Collection:

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Praise for A Harvest of Words

The latest issue of the journal Western American Literature (Fall 2013) includes a review of the Center’s publication A Harvest of Words: Contemporary South Dakota Poetry, edited by Patrick Hicks. The reviewer, who teaches at Utah State University, writes, “A Harvest of Words provides a rare and nourishing bounty intended for a variety of poetic tastes. The voices are rich and thoughtful and confident, inviting the outsider (us) to share in their varied experiences and the stories of heritage and identity, as well as to investigate our own stories’.”

New History of World War II Army Technical School Coming

In his new history of the Sioux Falls Army Technical School, historian Lynnwood Oyos proposes that the radio school and air base changed Sioux Falls in the post-World War II era as much as the railroads did in the preceding century. The technical school, where 30,000 men and women trained, brought new wealth to the community, changed social attitudes, stimulated construction of new homes and businesses, contributed to the city’s first industrial park, and created what is today downtown Sioux Falls’ first modern airport. The new illustrated book from the Center for Western Studies and S.D. Medicine Valley, A Harvest for Sioux Falls, will be released in April 2014, just in time for the 75th anniversary of the school. Check for additional information on the CWS website and Facebook, and in the spring issue of CWS News.
The Center for Western Studies
Augustana College
2001 South Summit Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57197

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Events Calendar

January
22 Opening Reception for Cathleen Benberg and Steve Beaucien Art Exhibit

February
14-16 5th Artists of the Plains Art Show & Sale
22 Saturdays at CWS: Scrapbooking from an Archivist’s Perspective, by Collections Assistant Liz Thord

March
Cathleen Benberg and Steve Beaucien Art Exhibit continues
6-8 Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha

April
4-5 South Dakota State Historical Society History Conference, Pierre
25-26 South Dakota Conference World War I Era in the Plains

The Center for Western Studies
Augustana College
2001 South Summit Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57197

The Byneset Historical Society from Trondheim, Norway, made its yearly visit to CWS on September 26, 2013.

As a sponsor of the Journey to Justice series, the Center for Western Studies hosted author Joseph Marshall, who discussed his book The Lakota Way on October 27, 2013. Volunteer Tom Houle introduced the speaker.

www.augie.edu/cws

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